

The Southeastern Librarian

Volume 60 | Issue 1

Article 13

Spring 2012

Book Review: Open House: The Arkansas Governor's Mansion and its Place in History

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Recommended Citation

Matthews, Melinda F. (2012) "Book Review: Open House: The Arkansas Governor's Mansion and its Place in History," *The Southeastern Librarian*: Vol. 60 : Iss. 1 , Article 13.

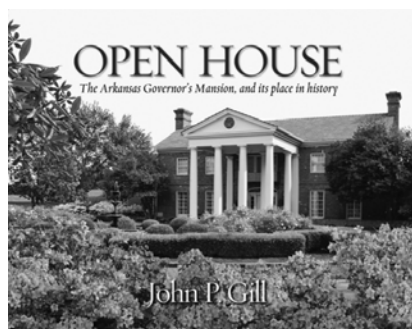
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made a greater impact upon the historical scene.

Stewart's research is in-depth, colorful, spiked with historical figures, and filled with data charts that are helpful to any scholar of North Carolina history and its historical trends and issues. As an economics text, it is colorful and engaging reading. As an historical text, it is well documented and enlightening.

Carol Walker Jordan
Queens University of Charlotte



Gill, John P. *Open House: The Arkansas Governor's Mansion and its Place in History*. Little Rock: The Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, 2010. 230 p. ISBN-10: 1-935106-26-0. \$50.00.

The matchless piece has connection to the Southern USA since the masterwork is a discussion of the governor's mansion of Arkansas in Little Rock. The writing style is outstanding and easy to understand with numerous quotes from Arkansas governors and their wives and children on living in the beautiful palatial mansion. The perceived interest to the readership of the journal is superior. The vividly captivating one

hundred twenty-five photographs of the exterior and ninety-seven lovely photographs of the interior of the mansion along with the splendid details enchant readers of *Southeastern Librarian* particularly librarians to visit the mansion to educate themselves with the history and to see the magnificent house and scenery. Ninety-one other pictures show the governors and people residing and participating in the activities at the glamorous mansion. The superb content comprises Contents, Foreword, a family tree of Arkansas Governor's Mansion First Families 1950-2010, *Rosewood Construction, Renovation, Merci Furnishings, Sitting on a Neighbor's Porch, Neighborhood, That Old House Mansion Commission, Association/Operation Expenses, Cinderella Life in the Mansion, Liza The Kitchen, You Ain't Ready Trusties, Come Run Our House Administrator/Staff, I'll Take #3 with a Coke, Security, Trick or Treat Holidays and Weddings, Ole Red Pets, We Accept with Pleasure Public Events, Warriors' Reunion Visitors, Rosemary Punch Gardens, and the End of Your Beginning Conclusion, Appendix 2010 Arkansas Mansion Governors, Commission, Association, and Staff, Endnotes, and Photographs and Illustrations.*

Agnes Bass Shinn, President of Arkansas Federation of Women's Club wanted a residence for the United States Arkansas governor. Judge James M. Shinn and Agnes obtained one hundred thousand dollars in 1947 to create the house and an additional ninety-seven thousand dollars in 1949. The palace resides on 8.27 acres and is where a blind school stood. It is listed with the National Register of Historic Places. The mansion is Greek Revival and the inside is Georgian and colonial. The famous opulent mansion's Grand Hall where numerous parties and functions occur was developed

for 3.5 million. Two businesses are in Arkansas due to parties at the Grand Hall. The Arkansas seal measuring eight feet made of fifteen woods of Arkansas decorates the Grand Hall Floor. The Grand Hall warms with two fireplaces.

The furniture is chiefly English some French and American with carpets of the Eastern empire. A 1770 grandfather clock from Ireland, adorned with moon phases, intrigues guests. The house dazzles with a majestic circular stairway, a 1765 Baccard chandelier from Napoleon's assistant Count Durosnel's French home and a Louis XVI chandelier from New York's Byar's. The silver set utilized in the ward's room of the USS Arkansas, the sole battleship from the United States in Normandy, is displayed in Chippendale cabinets.

The opulent home captivates with seven gardens including an entrance garden, a rose garden, a garden for the family, a garden of vegetables, a parterre garden, Arkansas native trees, and a herbaria which provides potpourri presents to charm visitors. The herbs from the herbarium supply chocolate mint for ice cream, thyme tea, lemon verbena tea, and rosemary punch for guests, the governor and family. Flowers are grown for fresh flower displays. Guests also receive jars of mansion made pickles. Mansion cook Liza Ashley published a cook book of mansion recipes *30 Years in the Mansion*. Iron entry gates, eight entry Tuscan entry columns, a Janey Crane fountain, a greenhouse, and a child's playhouse lure tourists.

Current Governor Mike Beebe and his wife Ginger supply mansion group excursions upon meeting the groups in the entry way. Mrs. Ginger Beebe developed a mansion group showing for people who cannot hear. Legendary people who visited are Zambia's

president, Miss America and Miss USA both of Arkansas, the Beverly Hillbillies, June Allyson and Dick Powell, Bob Hope, Billy Graham, Gregory Peck, Glenn Campbell, President Truman, Colonel Sanders, Roy Rogers, Gene Autry, Minnie Pearl, Warren Beatty, Frankie Avalon, Barbara Eden, Alabama, Charlie Daniels Band, Milburn Stone and Ken Curtis from Gunsmoke, fighter Evander Holyfield, and the Indonesian ambassador. Mansion socials included United Daughters of Confederacy of Arkansas, modeling sponsored by the Salvation Army, and Phantom of the Mansion Gala and Ball where President Clinton enthralled with the saxophone.

Academic and public libraries should own the book because of its priceless historical value and its invaluable allure to potential Arkansas tourists. Conclusively and delightfully, the last sentence of the fascinating masterpiece, *Open House*, is genius author John P. Gill welcoming people to visit the spectacular governor's mansion of Arkansas at 1800 Center Street in Little Rock.

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